UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/HUS/6
21 November 1983

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Second Meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment

16-21 January, 1984

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS DURING THE BIENNIUM 1982-83

E/ECA/HUS/6

Summary

The progress report contained in the following chapters shows clearly that the Economic Commission for Africa continues to encounter a certain number of difficulties in the implementation of the work programme and order of priorities for the human settlements sector. This work programme and order of priorities was drawn up in the light of the resources available and is designed to implement the decisions taken in that sector by the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment.

It should be recalled that during its previous meeting the Joint Committee had considered the progress report for the period 1980-1981 which highlighted the inadequacy and irregularity of available financial resources. That report stated that the difficulties were mainly due to the low level and instability of resources because the secretariat had not been able to renew the extra-budgetary funds allocated for the execution of the human settlements programme. A number of measures were then suggested for remedying this lack of resources by the adoption of co-operation mechanisms between States based on the development of exchanges of national experts within the region.

Unfortunately, during its discussions from 29 June to 2 July 1982, the Joint Committee was unable to devote the necessary time to the consideration of this problem and to take the necessary steps to remedy the basic lack of financial resources which seriously impeded the implementation of its regional policy decisions.

Consequently, the activities of the Human Settlements Section were limited. Since the work programme for the period July 1982 - January 1984 could not be fully carried out, ad hoc priorities had to be decided upon, especially as regards the components of the biennial planning programme.

For this sub-sector of regional policy for human settlements, activities were concentrated on the training of the necessary staff.

However, the Commission, still having some funds allocated by UNEP under the programme for building materials and construction industries development, was able to continue all the activities planned in this field, as described in this document.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate to recall that Section IV entitled "Organization at the regional level" of General Assembly resolution 32/162 recommends in paragraph 4 that "each regional committee should be served by a unit of the secretariat of the parent regional commission...

Furthermore, in resolution 316(XIII), the Conference of Ministers of the Commission authorizes the Executive Secretary to establish the technical unit in question within the Commission. The Human Settlements Section of the Commission is therefore the instrument available to the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment for carrying out its regional and sub-regional responsibilities. The Committee should therefore find a way to overcome the difficulties which limit the services which this unit can perform on its behalf.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The third meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements which was also the first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, pursuant to Resolution 298(XVI) of the Conference of Ministers, was held at the headquarters of ECA from 22 June to 2 July 1982. At that meeting the Committee reviewed the activities undertaken by its secretariat during the period 1980 - 1982, identified priority areas which would form the basis of its future programmes and activities, and adopted resolutions on the priority areas, namely:

(i) Spatial planning within the framework of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, Resolution 4(I);

(ii) Building materials and construction industries development, Resolution 5(I); and

(iii) Human Settlements financing mechanisms, Resolution 6(I).

2. In accordance with the institutional arrangements governing the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (resolution 1(I) of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and resolution 35?(XIV) of the ECA Conference of Ministers), the report and resolutions adopted at the first meeting of the Joint Committee were presented to the fourth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole held in Addis Ababa from 11 to 22 April 1983.

3. The Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole studied the report and resolutions of the Joint Committee and submitted its comments and recommendations to the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Commission which was held, also in Addis Ababa, from 27 April to 3 May 1983.

4. After examining the conclusions of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole, the Conference of Ministers adopted resolution 475(XVIII)1/ entitled "Human Settlements".

5. In that resolution, the Conference of Ministers endorsed the report and resolutions adopted by the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment and among others, endorsed the emphasis on physical planning, housing financing mechanisms and building materials policies and programmes as necessary priority issues for the development of a regional human settlements policy and programme in pursuance of the objectives and strategies of the Monrovia Declaration and the Lagos Plan of Action.

6. The purpose of the present report is to give an overview of the main activities undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa during the period August 1982 to December 1983 with regard to the resolutions adopted by the Joint Committee at its first meeting and approved by the Conference of Ministers at its ninth meeting. The problems encountered in the implementation of the resolutions, as well as, efforts made to find solutions to those problems are also discussed in the report.

1/ See Annex I.

II. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES (with reference to resolutions of the Joint Committee)

7. The activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa from August 1982 to December 1983 with regard to the resolutions adopted by the Joint Committee at its first meeting are discussed under four sub-headings, namely:

(i) Spatial planning;
(ii) Building materials and construction industries development;
(iii) Human Settlements financing mechanisms, and
(iv) Co-operation between ECA and other United Nations and international organizations.

Spatial planning

8. The first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment drew attention to the importance of spatial planning to the economic development of African countries. The discussions at the meeting revealed that many countries in the African region lacked the expertise to handle the development and implementation of national physical plans. In fact only about half of the countries in the region had institutions for training professional architects and planners and some countries were experiencing acute shortages of such professional personnel. The consensus of opinions was that technical assistance at the regional level would have to focus on this problem with a view to helping countries not technically in a position to develop national physical plans in the foreseable future. In adopting resolution 7(I) therefore, the Joint Committee emphasized the need for training qualified personnel in the field of spatial planning. The resolution comprised three main elements:

(i) Pilot projection spatial planning;
(ii) Expert Group meeting on integration of physical planning with socio-economic planning; and
(iii) Training of all categories of manpower in the fields of human settlements and environment.

9. In implementing this resolution, the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa directed its attention at analysing training needs in the major disciplines necessary for the formulation and implementation of human settlements policies and programmes in the region. In this connexion two main activities were undertaken by the secretariat:

(a) Preparation and circulation of a questionnaire to all States members of the Commission; and

(b) Organization of an expert group meeting.

10. The questionnaire entitled "Technical questions on which to assess the present situation and determine training needs in urban and physical planning in member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa" elicited responses from twelve countries 2/. Even though the percentage returns was low, about 25 percent, the responses received gave a general appreciation of the situation in the African countries. The twelve countries reported a total number of 291 physical

2/ Ethiopia, Guinea (Conakry), Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

and urban planners and estimated their needs for such professional personnel during the next twenty years as 3,000. About 90 percent of the specialists reported on were trained outside the African region, in the United States of America, Europe and Asia. Since the economic, social, political and cultural context in which human settlements programmes are planned and implemented differ from region to region it would be advantageous to have the required professional personnel trained in Africa. Multinational co-operation in this regard is considered vital to the achievement of the desired objectives. A detailed report on the results of the survey entitled "Needs and orientation of training in the field of human settlements in Africa" was presented to the Expert Group Meeting on regional human settlements training facilities and mechanisms organized by ECA in November 1983 (see para. 11 below).

Expert Group Meeting

11. The expert group meeting on regional human settlements training facilities and mechanisms was organized at ECA headquarters from 1 to 7 November 1983. The objectives of the meeting were:

(i) To assess the relevance and adequacy of existing human settlements training facilities and mechanisms to the current problems and needs of the African region;

(ii) To draw up guidelines for the formulation of policies for the organization of training facilities and programmes for human settlements personnel in the region.

12. Five subject areas were selected to constitute the basis of discussions at the meeting. These were:

(a) Architecture;
(b) Urban planning;
(c) Construction;
(d) Sanitation and waste disposal;
(e) Skills requirements, public policy and training.

13. Nine experts were invited from eight countries to participate in the meeting and present papers on the above subject areas based on their expertise and experience with regard to training facilities and mechanisms.

14. It is expected that the outcome of the meeting would constitute the basis for in-depth studies on policies and programmes in training of human settlements personnel in the African region. The report of the expert group meeting is attached as Addendum 1 (see document E/ECA/HUS/6/Add.1).

Building materials and construction industries development

15. At its first meeting the Joint Committee stressed the importance of a strong and self-reliant building materials and construction industries sector for human settlements development in the African region and in its resolution 5(I), called for measures to be taken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels to ensure the rapid and rational growth of the sector. It will be recalled that a special programme (Building Materials and Construction Industries Development Programme) has been under implementation since 1979 with the objective of stimulating and assisting African countries to increase their capabilities for self-sustaining growth and to achieve self-sufficiency in the building materials and construction industries at the continental level. This programme has been financed from extra-budgetary resources but its continuation beyond April 1984 is in doubt because of lack of funding. The main activities carried out under the programme during the reporting period are presented below.

Regional advisory services

16. At the request of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania a pre-feasibility study was undertaken on the prospects of reactivating a project for the production of lime pozzolana in the Lindia region of that country and transforming it into a sub-regional demonstration project to give training in the production and use of this local material. Detailed proposals on the project were submitted to the Government for a decision on the follow-up actions to be undertaken. Proposals were also made on strengthening building and building materials research facilities and programmes including information dissemination in the United Republic of Tanzania.

17. Assistance was also given to the Project Evaluation and Feasibility Department of the Ministry of Industry, Zambia in connexion with a proposed sectoral study on building materials. Information was provided to the Government of Zambia on the development of local building materials and the assistance of UNIDO in follow-up activities was offered.

18. Proposals were made for carrying out pre-feasibility studies on the development of local building materials in the Gambia and Sierra Leone. These studies will be undertaken as funds become available.

Development of cement production in West Africa

19. Portland cement is a key building material in African countries and shortages in its availability have created severe bottlenecks in the completion of major construction projects in many countries. Integrated cement plants as well as clinker grinding plants have been set up and are operating in a number of countries in the region. Many countries, however, have to depend either partially or entirely on external sources, very often outside the African region, for their cement supplies.

20. In view of the importance of cement to the construction sector, the African Heads of State and Government have stressed the need to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of this building material in the African region by the year 2000. With this objective in view, and at the request of the Council of Ministers of the Plenary Session (ID/BC.1/115), a study of the cement industry in seven West African countries (Benin, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Upper Volta) was undertaken, through the services of a consultant between July and September 1983. It was not possible to cover all the sixteen countries in that subregion because of financial constraints.

21. The main purpose of the study was to examine the existing situation with regard to the production and consumption of cement, the operational characteristics and problems of cement production plants and to assess the need for additional production capacity within the subregion to meet the future demand for cement. The study brought into focus important aspects of the cement problem in the West African subregion and outlined measures to be taken to improve the performance of existing plants and to initiate plans for meeting the future demand for cement.

22. Integrated cement plants in the group of countries covered in the study achieved capacity utilization rates of between 16 and 93 per cent with an average of 65 percent in 1982. The clinker grinding plants achieved an average capacity utilization rate of 57 percent in that same year. In fact the cement and clinker imports to the countries in 1982 could have been reduced from 6,627,000 to 4,071,000 tonnes if the existing plants had been able to fully utilize their installed capacities.

23. The study estimated that to meet the demand for cement in the seven countries by 1990, an additional 10 million tons would have to be installed or produced locally, assuming that existing and planned cement plants would achieve a capacity utilization rate of 80 per cent.

24. The study emphasized the importance of adopting cement production technologies that would help to reduce costs, and operational procedures that would enhance optimum capacity utilization so as to improve the competitiveness of cement produced in the sub-region. Sub-regional co-operation is necessary for realizing the full potential of cement production in West Africa considering the present distribution of limestone and other factor inputs. The role of the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in this regard was highlighted. A detailed report on the study will be presented to the Council of Ministers of the Treaty-based ECLPOC at its next meeting in Conakry (Guinea) in February 1985.

Promotion of the development of other building materials

25. A preliminary study of the existing situation and potential with regard to the development of the production of lime, pozzolana and lime-pozzolana products in the African region was undertaken and the report circulated to the States members of the Commission. The study revealed some important facts about the production and use of these materials:

(i) Low production of lime;

(ii) Low utilization of lime in construction;

(iii) Low utilization of pozzolana - known usage is only for the production of pozzolana cement;

(iv) Almost negligible production of lime-pozzolana;

(v) Almost every country in Africa has some deposit of usable limestone (or dolomite);

(vi) Natural pozzolana is available particularly in the countries which have experienced volcanic activities in the past - notably those in Eastern and Central Africa;

(vii) Many countries have abundant resources of clay which could be used to make burnt clay pozzolana;

(viii) Rice husk, which when burnt produces a highly reactive pozzolana, is available in reasonably large quantities in some rice growing countries.

26. Considering the fact that many African countries experience frequent shortages in the supply of portland cement for construction projects, positive measures should be taken to exploit the tremendous opportunities that exist for increasing the production of lime, pozzolana and lime-pozzolana which are good substitutes for portland cement in certain construction activities. ECA is exploring the feasibility of setting up a pilot plant demonstration project in one of the African countries for the production of lime-pozzolana and to create a training centre around this plant to impart the production and utilization technology to technicians from African countries.

27. A proposal for promoting pre-feasibility studies on the production of cement-bonded particle board as a low cost building material in Africa was prepared jointly with the FAO/ECA/UNIDO Forest Industries Advisory Group for Africa based at ECA headquarters. Cement-bonded particle board has several practical advantages including efficient utilization of wood waste, low consumption of cement per unit of construction and possibilities for prefabrication.

29. A pre-feasibility study was subsequently undertaken in Ethiopia at the request of the Government through the services of a consultant furnished to the Forest Industries Advisory Group by FAO. Follow-up actions on the recommendations of the study are in progress. Possibilities for similar studies in Algeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast will be pursued in the future subject to the availability of funds.

Promotion of building and building materials research

30. The project on the transformation of the "Centre de la Construction et du Logement" of Cotonou, Lome (Togo) into a sub-regional building and building materials research centre to serve initially, Benin, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta, continued to receive priority attention. The final documents for the project (project document, project agreement and constitution of the new centre) were considered at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Niamey-based MULPOC held at Cotonou (Benin) in March 1983.

31. It was decided at that meeting that the documents may be formally signed by the Governments concerned either at ECA headquarters on the occasion of the ECA Silver Jubilee celebrations in April/May 1983 or in the respective countries under special arrangements with the secretariat of ECA. At a meeting of officials of the countries convened by ECA on 29 April 1983, the delegates requested further time to enable their Governments to finalize their preparations for the signing of the documents.

32. In May 1983, the Executive Secretary of ECA addressed a communication to the Governments requesting them to make the necessary arrangements to have the documents signed in the respective countries. The governments of Benin and Togo have since signed the documents.

33. It is expected that the other countries participating in the project would soon sign the documents to permit further actions to be taken, including submission of the project document to donor agencies for financial assistance.

34. In order to provide opportunities for increased cooperation among building and building materials researchers and also among research centres, ECA has published two directories. One on "Building and building materials research scientists and technologists in Africa", and the other on "Building and building materials research organizations in Africa".

35. Following the publication of these two directories, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to all Member States to collect the necessary information for the publication of a "Catalogue of building and building materials research in Africa". The objective of the catalogue will be to bring together relevant information on various topics (in the building sector) which have been the subject of study at the building and building materials research institutes in the region. It is expected that this information will help in bringing researchers up to date on the extent to which these topics have been studied, the results which have been achieved and the practical benefits that have been derived from the findings of the studies. Thus, it is hoped, researchers will be able to take advantage of this accumulated experience in planning their own research programmes and thereby avoid costly duplication of research effort.

Reformulation of building codes and regulations

35. The reformulation of building codes and regulations is one of the key elements of the ECA regional programme for the development of building materials and construction industries. The objective of this programme element is to assist in promoting rapid indigenization of the construction sector through the formulation and adoption of suitable codes and regulations which are responsive to local building needs and are conducive to the indigenous production of building materials and their effective utilization.

36. At its last meeting held in Mbabane (Swaziland) in February 1982, the Council of Ministers of the Lusaka-based SADCC examined proposals for the reformulation of building codes and regulations submitted by the ECA secretariat. In accepting the proposals as a practical basis for countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa subregion to design new national building codes and regulations, the Council requested the secretariat of ECA to prepare a detailed set of model building codes and regulations indicating guidelines for their effective administration. The documents would then be submitted to an expert group meeting for study and recommendations for adoption by the Governments of the subregion.

37. Funds are still being sought to undertake this project activity which is of vital interest to the countries of the African region as a whole.

Human Settlements Financing Mechanisms

38. The evolution of viable human settlements financing mechanisms in African countries, with special reference to the setting up of housing financing institutions, engaged the attention of the Joint Committee at its first meeting. The Committee agreed that financing of housing construction was a subject that needed urgent attention by Governments in view of the fact that housing was a basic necessity of life to which the population was entitled. The Committee therefore regretted the failure of most housing banks in African countries to cope with the ever increasing recurrent housing demand and called for the development and implementation of new approaches that would bring about substantial improvements in the availability of funds to finance housing development programmes.

39. In its resolution 6(J) on human settlements financing mechanisms, the Joint Committee inter alia, requested the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa to organize a compilation of the necessary data for an evaluation of the experiences of member States regarding the various potential sources of finance, and to provide the required technical assistance to one or two member States in organizing innovative housing financing schemes.

40. During the period under review, technical assistance was provided to the Government of Botswana in the field of housing finance through the joint action of ECA and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, Habitat). Since ECA had limited financial resources to respond effectively to the request for assistance it was agreed with UNCHS (Habitat) for one of its redeployed staff to ECA headquarters to undertake a one month mission to Botswana in December 1982 with UNCHS (Habitat) funding.

41. The request from the Government of Botswana was for assistance in defining and creating a viable housing finance mechanism that would reduce the burden on the government which had hitherto provided virtually all the funds for housing development, other than individual housing construction, in the country. After a careful study and analysis of the situation in the country, recommendations were

submitted to the Government on the establishment of a semi-autonomous Housing Finance Unit that would be responsible for mobilizing funds for investment into the housing sector. Potential sources of funds for the operations of the Housing Finance Unit were identified and guidelines prepared for their effective utilization.

42. The Government of Botswana has been studying the report of the technical assistance programme and has, meanwhile, requested UNCHS (Habitat) to provide further assistance in establishing the proposed Housing Finance Unit. Action on this request is in progress.

Other activities

Public participation in housing development

43. The declining economic performance at the national level and the concomitant reduction in public grants for popular housing in many countries, bring into focus the need to direct increasing attention to the potential role of self-help and other public participation systems in housing development in Africa. With a view to planning realistic programmes to assist member States in this field in the future, the secretariat of ECA organized a seminar on 'the impact of self-help and housing co-operatives and other public participation systems in human settlements programmes' from 23 November to 2 December 1983 at ECA headquarters.

44. The main objectives of the seminar were:

(i) To evaluate the impact of public participation systems on housing development, with special reference to the lower income sector, based on experiences from different African countries;

(ii) To evolve guidelines for the review of national policies on self-help and housing co-operatives and other public participation systems in human settlements development; and

(iii) To identify areas for international assistance through ECA.

45. Experts from seven African countries and one each from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the German Development Assistance Association for Social Housing (DESWOS) participated in the seminar. Discussions at the seminar were focused on five subject areas: organization and management; technical assistance; financing; public involvement; external aid.

46. The outcome of the seminar would constitute the basis of in-depth studies to be undertaken by the ECA secretariat on policies and programmes on self-help and co-operative housing programmes in the African region. The report on the seminar is attached as Addendum 2 (see document E/ECA/HSD/6/Add.2).

Co-operation between ECA and other UN and International organizations

47. In compliance with the decisions of the Joint Committee regarding the strengthening of co-operation with UNCHS (Habitat) for effective implementation of regional human settlements programmes, the secretariat continued to maintain effective communication with the former during the period under review. Two working sessions were held with the Executive Director and his staff at UNCHS (Habitat) headquarters in Nairobi for discussions on the general framework of co-operation between the two secretariats, as well as, on co-operation arrangements regarding specific project activities.

48. ECE and UNCHS (Habitat) jointly planned and implemented a programme of assistance to the Government of Botswana concerning the setting up of a housing finance institution in that country. With funds provided by UNCHS (Habitat), a mission was undertaken to Botswana in December 1982 by a Habitat staff member redeployed to ECE headquarters, to carry out the necessary studies in connexion with the Government's request for assistance. Recommendations were submitted to the Government for study and follow-up actions have been initiated by UNCHS (Habitat) to assist in the implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Government.

49. ECE also participated in the sixth session of the Commission on Human Settlements held in Helsinki, Finland from 25 April to 6 May 1983 under the financing of UNCHS (Habitat).

50. Co-operation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) centred on the identification of projects that could be implemented jointly by ECE and ILO for promoting building materials and construction industries development in Africa. Discussions on the subject have not been finalized but there appears to be scope for organizing joint activities with regard to the preparation and field application of manuals for construction industry enterprises and personnel with the objective of promoting improved efficiency and cost reduction in construction.

51. At the invitation of ILO, ECE participated in a regional seminar organized by the former in October 1982 in Harare, Zimbabwe with the objective of assisting the development of small and medium-scale construction enterprises in Africa.

52. At the third session of the ECE/UNESCO joint consultation meeting held at ECE headquarters in March 1983, the scope for co-operation between the two organizations in the field of building materials and construction technology development in the African region was discussed. Discussions are continuing on specific projects for which joint activities could be planned and executed. ECE and UNESCO also held consultations with regard to the preparations for a regional seminar on "Construction technology adapted to the environment" that UNESCO is planning to organize.

53. The scope for technical co-operation between ECE and ESCWA (Economic Commission for Western Asia) in the field of building materials and construction industries development was discussed at a meeting with a representative of ECE Human Settlements Section. The possible areas of co-operation identified were: building materials for low cost housing, training programmes for building materials technicians and building contractors, and research and information services.

54. The secretariat of ECE continued to support the activities of Shelter-Africa, the subsidiary company set up by the African Development Bank with the primary objective of mobilizing funds for financing housing development programmes in African countries. ECE participated in the second general meeting of Shelter-Africa held in Nairobi on 5 and 6 December 1982.

55. The secretariat continued to explore opportunities to further strengthen existing working relations with the International Council for Building Research, Studies and Documentation (CIB) and the International Union of Testing and Research Laboratories for Materials and Structures (RILEM). It actively collaborated with these two organizations, as well as, UNCHS, UNIDO and UNESCO in organizing a regional symposium on "Appropriate materials for low cost housing" in November 1983 at Nairobi, Kenya. The deliberations of the symposium, which brought together professionals actively involved in the development, selection and use of building materials for housing in developing countries, would constitute a useful input into ECE's programme of assistance to African countries in the promotion of a building materials industry capable of meeting national housing and construction needs.

56. The secretariat also participated in the ninth triennial congress of CIB which took place in Stockholm, Sweden in August 1983. Discussions are continuing with CIB on the possibility of co-sponsoring specific development projects in the field of building and building materials research, information and training.

57. Co-operation between ECA and the Economic and Social Development Centre of the German Foundation for International Development, DSE in the field of human settlements was revived during the reporting period. Following discussions held with the director of the Centre during the first meeting of the Joint Committee, the Centre sponsored the participation of a representative of ECA secretariat in its seminar on "urban development and infrastructure planning" organized in West Berlin in October 1983 for fifteen representatives from ten English-speaking African countries.

58. ECA and DSE have also agreed in principle to jointly organize two workshops on "Innovative housing financing mechanisms for low income groups in Africa" for English-speaking and French speaking African countries, respectively during 1984.

59. A representative of the secretariat participated in a seminar on "Economic housing in developing countries" organized in Paris in January 1983 jointly by the "Centre scientifique et technique du batiment (CSTB)", the "Plan construction" and the "Fonds national des agents et chaussées". Discussions were also held during the period under review, on the possible collaboration of CSTB in the implementation of the project for the establishment of a sub-regional building and building materials research centre in the West African sub-region.

III. PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

60. A major problem that continued to limit the project implementation capabilities of the secretariat was the inadequacy of human and financial resources. Recruitment procedures are however nearing completion to fill the two vacant posts (P.2 and P.4) in the Human Settlements Section of ECA secretariat. This will increase the regular budget staff strength to four. During the greater part of the period under review, only one of the two professional staff provided to ECA headquarters by UNCHS (Habitat) was at post. The second staff member was expected to be at post in December 1983. The other two staff members in the Human Settlements Section are financed from extra-budgetary resources and assigned specifically to the Building Materials and Construction Industries Development Programme.

61. The problem of inadequate financial resources constitutes a major operational bottleneck. Experience has shown that data collection through questionnaires sent by mail to the countries is rather ineffective since responses are generally low. For example, as was pointed out earlier responses were received from only 12 countries to the questionnaire on physical and urban planning personnel in the African region. The organization of field missions to selected countries to collect detailed information in connexion with projects on specific regional issues therefore becomes necessary if realistic assessments of existing problems are to be made and appropriate solutions recommended. Travel funds from the regular budget are however limited and may continue to be so for some time in view of the zero growth budget the United Nations secretariat has been called upon by the General Assembly to observe. Also the implementation of pilot projects and feasibility studies depends on the availability of extra-budgetary resources since such activities are not usually covered by the regular budget.

62. The lack of adequate extra-budgetary resources posed a serious constraint to the smooth implementation of the salient elements of the resolution on human settlements programmes adopted by the Joint Committee at its first meeting. Efforts made by the ECA secretariat to secure additional extra-budgetary resources for these programmes achieved limited success. Besides, no funds were pledged by member States specifically for human settlements activities at the last pledging conference organized during the ECA Silver Jubilee Celebrations in April/May 1983.

63. The Joint Committee is therefore called upon to give serious consideration to the question of mobilization of additional funds to enable the ECA Division which is designated as its secretariat to function more effectively, particularly with regard to the implementation of field studies and projects.

Annex I

Resolution 375 (XVIII) adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers

[ECA/CM/375/Rev.1]

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolutions 310 (XIII) of 1 March 1977 on the establishment of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and 353 (XIV) of 27 March 1978 on institutional arrangements for human settlements,

Recalling also its resolution 402 (XVI) of 10 April 1981 which extended the mandate of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements to include environmental matters,

Further recalling resolution 7 (IV) of the Fourth Conference of African Ministers of Industry of 26 November 1977,

Having examined the report 1/ of the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment held at Addis Ababa from 28 June to 3 July 1982 and the resolutions adopted at that meeting,

Noting with concern that the support of the United Nations Development Programme to the building materials and construction industries development programme is to be terminated by the end of 1983, which would seriously affect the continuation of ongoing activities and the implementation of projects planned in the framework of the programme with the result that the objective of self-sufficiency in this sector by the year 2000 would hardly be achieved,

1. Endorses the report and resolutions adopted at the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment;

2. Approves the emphasis on physical planning, human financing mechanisms and building materials policies and programmes as necessary priority issues for the development of a regional human settlements policy and programme in pursuance of the objectives and strategies of the Kampala Declaration 2/ and the Lagos Plan of Action;

3. Urges member States to take steps to implement the specific actions defined in the resolutions adopted by the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment;

4. Calls upon the Commission on Human Settlements to assist the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment in the implementation of the regional human settlements priorities decided by the said Committee.

1/ E/ECA/HUS/ENV/.1.

2/ Organization of African Unity, Council of Ministers resolution CM/722 (XXVIII).

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5. Requests the Executive Secretary to take the necessary steps, in consultation with member States, the United Nations Development Programme, other United Nations and international organizations, to ensure the speedy and successful implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions, and particularly the continuation of the building materials and construction industries development programme far beyond its present termination date until the objective of self-sufficiency in building materials and construction industries enshrined in the Lagos Plan of Action is achieved;

6. Invites member States to take measures aimed at strengthening regional co-operation for the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Joint Inter-governmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment.

22[illegible]th meeting,
2 May 1983.